

UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the

UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY

202 East Third Street, Williamsport PA17701

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*The Staff, Officers
and Board Members
of United Churches
hope that
during your Advent and
Christmas sojourn, you
and those for whom you pray,
experience renewed hope
amid the many struggles of this year.*



*May we all be open to receive anew
the love, joy, peace and hope
that only He can bring,
at Christmas and throughout the year.*

ARE YOU ABLE TO VOLUNTEER FOR 2021? *

We are getting ready to fill the ministries schedule for 2021. Clergy & laity are needed!

Daily Telephone Devotions are recorded from home. Volunteer weekly.

Footsteps to Follow Editorials: Clergy and people in professional parachurch leadership are invited to sign up.

Please contact Gwen at director@uclc.org or 570-322-1110.

HELP FOR OUR HOSPITALS *

By now, you've likely heard how overwhelmed hospital staff are. They are so overwhelmed that some of the workers have difficulty getting bathroom breaks, let alone meal breaks. They are desperately looking for pre-packaged "snack" items, like microwave popcorn, ramen noodles, cookies, pretzels, dried fruit, trail mix, etc. Our hospitals have to be very strict about what is allowed in so **all items MUST be individually packaged.**

They are also looking for encouraging and uplifting notes for staff members. Anything that will lift someone's spirits or give them a bit of a boost will be welcomed...notes, cards, pictures from the kids, etc.

If you'd like to contribute, bring individually packaged snack items and notes to a drop off location to then be delivered to our area hospitals.



In the Williamsport area, the delivery point for UPMC Susquehanna (Williamsport campus) is...

Pine Street United Methodist Church
441 Pine Street
Williamsport

They are open between 8-3 weekdays and will deliver items as they accumulate.



SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

Rev. Mark Brumbach
570-322-6538
shepherd@ucl.org

“For God so loved the world that He gave...”

Our God is a giving God. He is aware of our needs both big and small, and out of His great love He cares and He gives. Advent and Christmas provide each of us with an annual opportunity to consider the depth of our need and God’s great generosity in giving so that our need might be met.

I want to thank all who have given to the Shepherd ministry in the past month. Many personal care items have been collected and delivered to us from local congregations enabling us to bless numerous families in the region. We continue to receive generous responses to our fall “asking letter”. Thank you to all who have prayerfully considered our need and our request and have responded with monetary contributions. Through the faithfulness of many individuals and local congregations in following God’s example of sacrificial giving, and through our faithful stewardship of what is given, we trust that God will continue to bless and to use the Shepherd of the Streets ministry. Just a reminder that all correspondence should be sent to our P. O. Box at Shepherd of the Streets, P. O. Box 2184, Williamsport, PA 17703. **Do not mail anything to our Park Ave. address or our former address on Center St. because it will be marked as undeliverable.**

My prayer for each of you is that you will enjoy a meaningful observation of Advent and a joyous celebration of the birth of our Savior.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve the least, the last and the lost in Jesus name through your prayerful support of the Shepherd ministry. I leave you with a word from Jesus, “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Luke 12:33, 34

These family sized hygiene items are always a blessing:

- Toothpaste and Toothbrushes
- Shaving Cream and Razors
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Women’s Hygiene Products
- Towels and Wash Cloths
- Band-Aids
- Hand/Body Lotion
- Facial Tissues and Toilet Tissue and Paper Towels
- Soap, Deodorant (men’s and women’s), Combs & Brushes
- Bedding - new or clean & gently used (Q & K preferred)
- Adult Diapers (pull-ups M, L and XL, especially M)
- Baby Diapers and Pull-Ups (Sizes 1-6, especially 3-6)
- Baby Shampoo, Wash, Lotion, Oil, and Wipes



DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet today?
The number is 570-322-5762.
It's available 24/7.



Devotions are three minutes or less, change daily, and are designed to lift your spirits and help you to have "A Closer Walk with God" even when we have to practice social distancing! The devotiona- lists this winter are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12/7-13 Pastors Jim/Kathy Behrens | 12/14-20 Deacon Sandra Grier |
| 12/21-27 Pastor Tammy Aichner | 12/28-1/3 Rev. Gwen Bernstine |
| 1/4-10 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner | 1/11-17 Rev. Georgianna Welch |
| 1/18-24 Rev. Gwen Bernstine | 1/25-31 Ms. Tiffany Haller |

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

FOOD PANTRY*

Mona Rundio, Coordinator 570-322-1657
Email - foodpantry@ucl.org

The Advent season is the time to share what you can with others; words, wisdom, food, and much more! Contributing to the community during these difficult times brings joy to many and helps enlighten our souls. The Holy Spirit’s light, guidance, strength, and encouragement help us give without expecting anything in return. Since we all have experienced loss during these days of COVID-19, it is more powerful than ever to believe that Our Savior’s spirit is here with us!

During this time of such hardship and despair, as we all stay inside and away from others, the food pantry numbers in our county have dropped. With the generous donations that have been coming in from many churches our shelves are now well stocked. We thank all the congregations still collecting donations for those in need and suggest that if possible, donations now come in financially. This will allow us more flexibility. We can purchase what we need as we need it, and not worry about expiration dates. And you will be safer not having to be out shopping. Checks or store gift cards can be sent to United Churches (with memo - food pantry). The address is 202 E. Third St., Williamsport PA 17701.



Thanks again to all the congregations and individuals who have been so loving and giving to those in need! We will print our list of needs when items are again the most helpful way to donate. We are located at the rear of 320 Park Avenue, Williamsport with hours of Monday: 9 – 11 for donations; Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:15 – 12 for clients (during COVID). Please continue this journey for those in need. We cannot survive without food for our body, love in our hearts, and the Spirit amongst our Souls! God Bless, Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Join us in making 2021 a year of Prayer and Celebration
 as we celebrate 75 Years of Ecumenical Life With
UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY *



Prayer:

We are making 2021 a special year of prayer involving all congregations and people in the county. The first part of the calendar is on page 4. Be part of this prayer event and contact UCLC's office to schedule your congregation's date(s) and prayer request(s).



Volunteers: In addition to providing food, we need volunteers to serve the prepared meals. Plan on being available from 10-1.

Donations: We also need donations of to-go containers, plastic forks, and napkins. (Your church may have some hanging out since we didn't get many chances to use them this year!)

Other service opportunities this year will include:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Habitat | UCLC Food Pantry | Kids Ministries |
| Area Shelters | Shepherd of the Streets | |
| CROP Walk | Mental Health Awareness | |
| Earth Day | Christmas Stockings with CWU | |

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity....

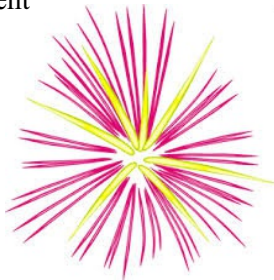
We have special plans for this year! Mark January 18th - 25th on your calendar. This also includes the Martin Luther King Jr. events.

Prayer Meeting....

We will have the opportunity to gather as people of faith on the last Sunday of the month via zoom for an evening time of prayer between 4 and 4:30. The meeting ID is 889 5190 0716 and the password is 732862.

Kick off Anniversary Celebration Service:

January 17, 2021 at 3 p.m. - Kick Off Event
 New Covenant UCC Williamsport
 202 East Third Street Williamsport
 also on Zoom
 and live-streamed on Facebook
 Guest Speaker
 Bishop Barbara Collins (ELCA)



Service Opportunities:

As part of our celebration, we will provide service opportunities (each month at different area ministries) lifting up and supporting our area ministries. In January, we will be serving dinner church on three Saturdays at Sojourner Truth (SJTM). Please take a look at your planners, reach out to your small groups, and contact Tammy at ucm@uclc.org to volunteer!

SJTM dates and meal plans follow....

January 9th: -Mac & Cheese -Fried Chicken -Corn -Rolls
 - Jello/Pudding

January 16th:-Biscuits -Sausage Gravy -Home Fries -Fruit

January 23rd:-Pulled Pork -Baked Beans -Cole Slaw -Cookies

Each week we will provide 75 take-out meals.

Special Events

- Concerts and Special Music: we may need to start with virtual events, then some outside events (perhaps vespers in the park) and maybe a traditional concert.
- The Past 25 Years (PowerPoint) at the Annual Assembly
- Installation of our new Executive Director - Pastor Tammy Aichner.
- Golf Tournament 10th Anniversary Year
- Victorian Christmas Sunday for Churches

- Some Dreams Still Unfolding...if COVID ends quickly...

- A Combined Choir with Dave Koskey director
- A special mission trip
- A picnic and ride on the Hiawatha
- A motorcycle ride

Special Memories and Moments

- Snapshots of our History to be placed in our newsletter.
- Ministries we've started that have become their own organizations.
- People out of our past (dramatizations)
- The Churches of Lycoming County (by Richard and Miriam Mix)

Thank you all:

It is always a pleasure to work with each of you! You are so willing to give of your time and talents and share the love that God has shared with you! As we continue to worship and serve in new ways, may we remember that we are stronger together, lifting each other up, and being united with our time, talent, and treasures.



THE YEAR OF PRAYER BEGINS! *

The heart of United Churches is our life and work together. We have built many relationships and look forward to building many more. Celebrate with a daily prayer calendar lifting up the congregations and ministries in our county and a joy or concern they would like us all to keep in prayer.

Monday 1/1 - **Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church**, 601 Hepburn Street, Williamsport, Rev. Anthony Viency - Pray for spiritual and world healing. 🙏

Saturday 1/2 - **First Saturday Suppers at Christ Episcopal Church**, 426 Mulberry Street, Williamsport, Rev. Kyle Murphy - Pray for everyone who does not have enough to eat, and those who help to see that they are fed. 🙏

Sunday 1/3 - **State Correctional Institution at Muncy**, Rev. Glenn McCreary, Catholic Chaplain - Please pray for the Christian Communities at SCI Muncy. 🙏

Monday 1/4 - **United Churches of Lycoming County**, 202 East Third Street, Williamsport, Rev. Gwen Bernstine, Executive Director, On this the 75th anniversary of our forming, please pray that Lycoming County continues to reach out to each other in love. 🙏

Tuesday 1/5 - **Pine Street United Methodist Church** - 441 Pine Street, Williamsport, Rev. James Wooster - We have recently entered into a relationship with The Unstuck Group, a consulting firm that works with churches to help churches thrive "by coaching them to focus vision, strategy, team and action." Over the next several months, The Unstuck group will be working with our leadership to assess our ministry health, align our staff and structure, and to create a strategic plan that enables us to live into God's dream for our congregation. Please pray for us as we go through this process. 🙏

Wednesday 1/6 - **Saving Grace Shelter**, 324 Campbell Street, Williamsport, Cleveland Way, Director - Pray that we receive wisdom and safety for the shelter as the staff attempts to serve the homeless and keep the shelter free from COVID-19. 🙏

Thursday 1/7 - **St. Boniface Catholic Church**, 326 Washington Boulevard, Williamsport, and **St. Lawrence Catholic Church**, 800 West Central Avenue, South Williamsport, Rev. William Corcoran - May we as children of God be mindful of God's presence within us and within others. 🙏

Friday 1/8 - **Muncy Baptist Church**, West Penn and South Market Streets, Muncy, Rev. Robert Rice - Pray that our congregation can share the hope of the Gospel with the community of Muncy. Also pray that God would protect and bless all our teachers, educators and support staff as they teach our students and keep everyone safe. 🙏

Saturday 1/9 - **Sojourner Truth Ministry**, 501 High Street, Williamsport, Rev. Angelique Labadie-Chianowyz, Director - Pray that the economically and otherwise challenged people served here know the transforming love of God. 🙏

Sunday 1/10 - **Pennsdale Friends Meeting House**, Mary Engle, Clerk - Pray with our small congregation as we too find our way through the pandemic, trying to stay active but with a number of people not feeling safe to be meeting for worship. Pray for all congregations who struggle with the clarity to see the way forward. As Friends tend to do, we "wait in the Light", individually and corporately, for guidance, trying not to rush God for that guidance. 🙏

Monday 1/11 - Pray for **all Church Staff** as they continue in their varied duties, both traditional and continually changing in these unprecedented times. 🙏

Tuesday 1/12 - **New Covenant United Church of Christ**, 202 East Third Street, Williamsport, Rev. Brad Walmer - Please pray for our congregation; the pastor, members and ministries. 🙏

Wednesday 1/13 - **Chaplaincy Department at UPMC Susquehanna** - Rev. John Charnock, Director - Pray for the health and safety of all Chaplains and Caregivers as they serve the sick and suffering. 🙏

Thursday 1/14 - **Unityville United Methodist Charge** - Pine Wesley and Franklin Fairview UMC - Kathy Burkhardt, Certified Lay Minister - Pray for us as we struggle without new, younger attendees with children. Help us to see our church and community with God's big eyes and a heart full of love. We don't have the modern technology younger families are used to, or the contemporary style of worship they often like. Our traditional worship experience keeps us healthy, but we continue to grow smaller as members age and join Your Heavenly Kingdom. Help us to hear God's guidance so we can be the fellowship of country folk that He wants us to be. 🙏

Friday 1/15 - **St. Marks Lutheran Church**, 142 Market St., Williamsport, Rev. Brian Vasey - Pray for all those and their families who are victims of COVID-19, and all those who are struggling with sickness, disease, unemployment, and isolation in this unprecedented time. Please also pray for healing for our church secretary. 🙏

Saturday 1/16 - **Calvary Church of the Nazarene**, 3200 Lycoming Creek Road, Williamsport, Rev. Terri Bennett-Smith - Pray that our congregation hears God's direction for a church specific community ministry for us. 🙏

Sunday 1/17 - **United Campus Ministry at Penn College**, Pastor Tammey Aichner, Coordinator - Pray for the students at Penn College of Technology as they begin their Spring Semester this week, and for all college students beginning their semester. 🙏

POVERTY: A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE **Christian Social Concerns Committee*

And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. (Luke 2:12) In Luke's Gospel, Mary and Joseph used the manger because the family was homeless in Bethlehem. We do not need to wait for Christmas to find the Christ child. God is present in the lives of the children and families whom we encounter in our communities, churches, food pantries, and homeless programs. What sign are we being to them not only at this season but throughout the year?

COVID-19 to Add as Many as 150 Million Extreme Poor by 2021: The World Bank reports that global extreme poverty is expected to rise in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic compounds the forces of conflict and climate change, which were already slowing poverty reduction progress. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction. Extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day, is likely to affect between 9.1% and 9.4% of the world's population in 2020, according to the biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report. This would represent a regression to the rate of 9.2% in 2017. Had the pandemic not convulsed the globe, the poverty rate was expected to drop to 7.9% in 2020. (Source: World Bank)

Hunger in America is Growing: In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment has soared and food insecurity is on the rise. In 2020 more than 50 million people may face hunger because of coronavirus. (Source: Feeding America)

Take Action: Coronavirus Response: Contact Congress - urge them to pass a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package that includes assistance for families struggling with hunger, specifically to increase SNAP food benefits by at least 15 percent and invest \$20 billion for the global response to COVID-19. Contact phone numbers: Senator Bob Casey (202-224-6324); Senator Pat Toomey (202-224-4254); Representative Fred Keller (202-225-3731).

Church Women United: A word of thanks and appreciation for your generous support of the Christmas Stocking project for the nursing homes in Lycoming County. Funds were donated from churches throughout the county and a total of eighteen women from as far as Muncy and Clarkstown and as near as the Williamsport area came to assemble the stockings at Pine Street United Methodist Church on Monday, November 16th. 869 stockings were delivered to the nursing homes and an additional 50 went to the Muncy Correctional Institution for the children who visit their mothers at Christmas. These stockings are channeled through Yokefellows.

ECUMENICAL LUNCH IS THE PLACE TO CONNECT WEDNESDAYS *

The Time Is Now to be part of our virtual lunches on Wednesdays for great programs this winter! You can bring your lunch to your computer, tablet or phone and enjoy conversation with each other and the speaker. Zoom is free. This link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/728915712>, will either help you download the app or prompt it to open. You are also able to connect by phone. Call 1-301-715-8592, (toll charges apply) when prompted enter the meeting number, 728-915-712 and passcode is 432662. For other arrangements call United Churches, 570-322-1110.

**DECEMBER:****ADVENT CHARACTER SERIES**

- 9- **Pastor Kathy Burkhart**, Unityville United Methodist Charge, *"Mary Was the Kind Of Person God Used To Bring Peace Into The World"*
- 16- **Pastor Tammey Aichner**, First Church of Christ Disciples, *"Joseph Modeled The Qualities That Help Us Deal With Challenging Situations"*
- 23- **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, United Churches, *"An Urchin Helps Us Understand Who Needs To Hear The Story"*

JANUARY:

- 6- **Rev. Ted Cockley**, St. John's Lutheran Church, Montgomery, and **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, United Churches, *"Happy 75th Anniversary United Churches"*
- 13- **Mr. David Young**, Member, Days of Remembrance Essay Contest Committee, *"Leadership Opportunities for Middle and High School Students as they Learn about the Holocaust"*
- 20- *Week of Prayer For Christian Unity* - TBA
- 27- **Jared Whitford**, Founder and Artistic Director of Studio 570, TBA

Sojourner Truth Ministries is hiring enthusiastic staff members for all shifts for the House of Hope (a Christ-based, transitional living home for women coming out of homelessness). If interested, please visit their website for more information (www.stmwilliamsport.org) and submit your resume to Melissa4stm@gmail.com. They are also seeking volunteers in various capacities!

- Perhaps your congregation would like to adopt a month for our feeding ministry?
- Consider taking a collection for one of the following items in your small group, Bible study, or a churchwide effort.
 - ▶ January: juice/lemonade mixes (no red dye please), coffee, cocoa, powdered creamer.
 - ▶ February: forks, spoons, take out containers, and rubbing alcohol.
 - ▶ March- Munchies- individually packaged servings of chips, protein bars (please no candy!), soft tissues.

Annual Assembly News

A Year Of Change

We went virtual for the 74th Annual Assembly of United Churches! It has indeed been a year of change and more is coming our way. On Thursday, November 19 at 10 a.m. about 40 people connected via Zoom technology to celebrate our common faith and the good we have done in Lycoming County over the past year.

President Phyllis Girven was filled with gratitude as she shared the highlights of the year and the dedicated people who carried out these ministries. Our Shepherd of the Streets director, Dr. Morris Smith, retired at the end of August after serving 19 years; our administrative assistants, Patty Gohrs and Gloria McDermott also retired. We were extremely fortunate to have Rev. Mark Brumbach take the position of the Shepherd, and Deb Bird has become our very capable new administrative assistant. Mark was installed as our Shepherd during the Assembly. Gwen Bernstine's retirement was officially announced at the Assembly. She will retire February 28, 2021 and Pastor Tammey Aichner will become the new Executive Director. She is our campus ministry coordinator, and Pastor of First Church of Christ Disciples.

Some of the celebrations of ministry included:

- ▶ Ministries that really care about each person we touch.
- ▶ Working with pastors/congregations and helping to build a healthier environment.
- ▶ Working with congregations during the pandemic to keep informed of changes/regulations/possibilities.
- ▶ Suicide prevention, mental health outreach/support.
- ▶ Keeping folks connected in as many ways as possible.
- ▶ Using new technology that allows us to keep in touch quickly, inexpensively, and efficiently.
- ▶ Interfaith conversations to understand neighbors.

The biggest obstacles of the year were:

- ▶ Nursing home and prison worship services had to stop because of the pandemic.
- ▶ All of us being unable to stay connected and keeping everyone up to date and involved.

This year it was Lou Kolb, a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, who received the Ecumenical Service Award. He was recognized for the ways he has extended the mission of our churches through his leadership and support at St. Mark's and Yokefellow Prison Ministry where he was very active. Known in the community as a familiar broadcaster for 45 years, he has directed the work of the broadcasting committee of United Churches, served on the personnel committee and as president. He noted that, "It's been among the most fulfilling times of my life, serving in several facets of UCLC, and some of them at times have been among the scariest times in my life." He spoke of his time developing podcasts, which after suggesting, he realized he would have to learn an enormously complex audio program. He learned enough to complete four wonderful podcasts!

- continued next month

CREATION CORNER

Christian Social Concerns Committee

Opening Quote: "Right there on page one, it explains that our job is to exercise careful dominion over the planet, which God has just made and found good. It's literally job one. We are failing to meet the first instruction laid down in Genesis." -source: Bill McKibben's article "Job One" in the November 2020 Sojourners magazine. McKibben, a layman in the United Methodist Church, is an environmentalist, activist, and author of 17 books on ecology since 1989, and helps fight against fossil fuels through the grassroots campaign 350.org.

The 350 mark of "parts per million" is what climate scientist Jim Hanson thinks is the upper boundary for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to maintain the ecological integrity of our civilization. The 2019 global average atmosphere CO2 level was 409 parts per million (ppm).

Podcast: How to Save a Planet (Gimlet). Weekly chat by conservation strategist Ayana Elizabeth Johnson with Gimlet Media co-founder Alex Blumberg.

Pandemic Book Titles:

Constructing the Outbreak: Epidemics in Media and Collective Memory. Katharine A. Foss.

Evolutionary Concepts in Immunology. Robert Jack and Louis Du Pasquier.

Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World. Fareed Zakaria.

A World Out Of Reach: Dispatches from Life Under Lockdown. Meghan O'Rourke.

On-line Video Series:

Earth's Great Seasons. BBC America.

Cooperation for the Paris Climate Agreement

The "We Are Still In" coalition supports the Agreement. The "Climate Action 100+" partnership includes more than 500 investors helping to move the largest greenhouse gas emitters to take meaningful, measurable action on climate change.

A New Kind of Environmentalism:

The Intersectional Environmentalist (IE)

The interconnected intersections of our identity (class, race, gender, etc.) as they apply to systems of disadvantage (or privilege) become, for example, a link between social and environmental justice that can result in "environmentalists for Black Lives Matter."

Quotations:

"We need a revolution of compassion for the planet and all its inhabitants...(T)his beautiful planet is our only home...(T)he earth's future is our future." -The Dalai Lama's Call to Action on the Climate Crisis.

"The welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all." Helen Keller

"In the woods, we return to reason and faith." Ralph Waldo Emerson

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Tenth Day of Christmas Concert: The Williamsport Chapter, American Guild of Organists, will present a public concert of organ music based on Christmas carols on Sunday, January 3, 2021, 3:00 pm, at Covenant Central Presbyterian Church, 807 West Fourth Street. Social distancing will be observed along with mask wearing.

Behind in Rent: Many people have found themselves behind in rent as we go through the pandemic. There is help to resolve disputes or evictions rather than go to court. Both landlord and tenant need to agree to abide by the terms of the mediation. Some of the CARES Act funding is no longer available, but some help is still available. Interested parties can self refer by calling 570-220-5136.

Family Children's Book Available: Retired U.M. Minister, Pastor Bob Wallace, has written a book about the resurrection of Jesus as told through the eyes of the donkey Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This story is a sequel to an earlier trilogy that told the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of a donkey, a lamb, and a camel. Copies of the books are available for \$7/each from Pastor Bob Wallace at 570-326-1521 or rwallace@susumc.org.

American Red Cross: Colder temperatures bring the risk of home heating fires. Please stay safe by properly warming your home this season by using these tips.

How to Heat Your Home Safely:

- ◆ If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, hard, nonflammable surface, such as ceramic tile. Don't place it on rugs and carpets, or near bedding and drapes; keep away from children and pets. Across the country, seven people die each day in home fires. A 2020 Red Cross survey showed that more than half of us have used a space heater, which is involved in most fatal home heating fires.
- ◆ Plug space heater power cords directly into outlets — never into an extension cord. Turn it off every time you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ◆ Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home.
- ◆ Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Use a glass or metal fire screen to keep fire & embers in the fireplace.
- ◆ Have wood & coal stoves, fireplaces and chimneys inspected yearly by a professional and cleaned if necessary.

Make a Plan and Test Smoke Alarms:



To help protect your family year-round, test your smoke alarms monthly and practice your home fire escape plan until everyone can escape in less than two minutes — the amount of time you may have to get out of a burning home before it's too late.

Visit www.redcross.org/fire for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family. You can also download the free Red Cross Emergency app (search "American Red Cross" in app stores).

American Rescue Workers will be hosting their annual **Holiday Food Distribution** at 643 Elmira Street, Williamsport from 1PM to 6PM on December 22nd. The Holiday Food Distribution will be a drive thru event. The distribution will include one turkey, one box, and three bags of food, all equaling out to 70 pounds! No sign-up is required for this event. For questions call 570-323-8401.

TOY ASSISTANCE: Individuals seeking toy assistance are being referred to The Salvation Army, Williamsport for Toys for Tots sign-ups.

CHRISTMAS DINNER: American Rescue Workers will be holding a to-go Christmas meal from the donation dock at 643 Elmira St. Wmspt. from 12-3 p.m. on Christmas Day (December 25th). Individuals are free to take as many meals as they need to feed their family for the holiday.

Mental Health Support Groups:
NAMI of North Central PA *Now meeting virtually*
Tuesday 12/8 - 6:30 to 8 pm
Contact Rae at rweber@joinder.org/570-601-6659.

Faith Based Support Groups: *In person w/precautions*
WECCC, 901 Diamond St. Wmspt. 1st+3rd Wed - 7 pm
SJTM, 501 High St, Wmspt, 2nd Thurs. 12:30 pm

Moms Demand Action are collecting FULL SIZE toiletry items and new underwear for women. There are 3 collection sites... Representative Jeff Wheeland's office (349 Pine St., Suite 1), The Genetti Hotel (200 W 4th St.), and St. Luke Lutheran Church (1400 Market St). Questions: contact the Wmspt. Chapter of Moms Demand Action WilliamsportForGunSense@gmail.com.

BRING A SMILE TO A RESIDENT *

Elmcroft, and other area Personal Care Homes, are collecting items for their residents this holiday season. Consider adding toiletries, boxes of candy, or small packs of tissues to your shopping list. If you'd like to shop for a resident without relatives contact their Activities Director for info. Your gifts don't need to be wrapped, but if you do so, label the contents and drop them off before Christmas.

Residents of area nursing facilities are still isolated as we try to keep them safe as the pandemic persists and grows in our community. We can **send cards** for the holidays or encouragement to family and friends. Packs of cards you've signed can be take to a facility for the activities department to be distributed as needed. The activities staff will also distribute **devotional booklets** (large print ones are appreciated.) If you are interested in becoming a pen-pal, or would like to participate in a phone call ministry, contact Gwen at director@uclc.org. Nursing facilities could also use gifts for the residents that don't have family members to shop for them. These items include books in large print or audio books, large print crossword or word finds or Sudoku books, and warm socks or slippers with non skid soles.

2021 RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS / HOLIDAYS CALENDAR

This listing, though selective and incomplete, highlights religious feasts, festivals and other observances. It is offered with the hope that awareness will be fostered of special days celebrated by other Christian Traditions and some celebrations of other Faiths present in our community.

KEY: (PC) Protestant Christians, (RC) Roman Catholic Christians, (OC) Orthodox Christians, (C) Christians [All], (E) Ecumenical. Other religions in our area - (I) Islam, (J) Jewish (B) Buddhist (IF) Interfaith (N) National

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
1 - New Year's Day --	2 - Meeting of Christ in the Temple OC	8-14 Brotherhood/Sisterhood Wk IF
6 - Epiphany/Theophony C	5 - Four Chaplains Sunday C+J	10 - Lailat al Miraj I
12 - Baptism of Jesus C	7 - Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday E	25- Annunciation of Virgin Mary RC
17 - UCLC Anniversary Kick Off All	12 - Chinese New Year B	28 - Magha Puja Day B
18-21 - MLK Dream Week All	14 - Transfiguration C	28 - Passover Begins (Pesach) J
18-25 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity E	16 - Shrove Tuesday PC & RC	28 - Palm Sunday PC+RC
	17 - Ash Wednesday PC & RC	
	21 - Great Lent (Triodion) Begins OC	
	26- Purim J	
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1 - Maundy Thursday PC+RC	2 - Pascha (Easter) OC	7 - Pentecost OC
2 - Good Friday PC+RC	7 - May Friendship Day (CWU) E	10 - Ascension of Jesus OC
4 - Passover Ends (Pesach) J	6 - National Day of Prayer N	29 - Feast of St. Peter & St. Paul RC
4 - Easter PC+RC	13 - Ascension of Jesus PC+RC	
8 - Yom Ha Shoah J	14-16 - Eid al Fitr - Ramadan Ends I	
13 - Ramadan Begins I	16-18 Shavuot J	
24 - Lazarus Saturday OC	23 - Pentecost PC+RC	
25 - Palm Sunday OC	26 - Visakha Puja Day B	
30 - Holy Friday OC	30 - United Churches Sunday E	
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
4 - Independence Day USA	6 - Transfiguration OC	1 - Islamic New Year I
11 - All Saints Day OC	15 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary RC+OC	8 - Birth of the Virgin Mary C
18 - Tisha B'Av J		11 - Memorial Bike Ride All
20-23 - Hajj Ends - Eid al Adha I		14 - Holy Cross Day RC+OC
		7-8 - Rosh Hashanah J
		16 - Yom Kippur J
		21-27 Sukkot J
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
3- World Communion Sunday E	1 - All Saints Day PC+RC	1 - World AIDS Day I
3 - Life Chain Sunday E	5 - World Community Day (CWU) E	6 - St. Nicholas Day C
4 - Saint Francis Day RC/PC	15 - Advent Begins (Winter Lent) OC	6 - Hanukkah Ends J
10 - CROP Walk All	21 - Entry of the Theotokos RC+OC	8 - Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary RC
15 - Dasara H	21 - Christ the King PC+RC	19 - Last Sunday of Advent C
	26 - Thanksgiving --	25 - Christmas C
	28 - Advent Begins C	31 - Watch Night C
	29 - Hanukkah Begins J	

NOTE: Celebrations of the Jewish & Islamic holy days begin at sundown the preceding day, and end at sundown on the holy day.